



A tractor operator covers over barrels at Resource Recovery Inc., Pasco. More than 2,100

similar barrels containing 2,4-D were buried at the site earlier this year.

# 100,000-gallon 2,4-D dump worries grapemen

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More than 100,000 gallons of the herbicide 2,4-D were buried in barrels at a Pasco dump site this year, at the same time vineyards were suffering their worst damage from unknown 2,4-D sources.

The chemical dump near the Pasco landfill is operated by Resource Recovery Inc., Olympia, under a state Department of Ecology permit. It is 14 miles from the closest grapes, at Snake River vineyards.

Norval Johansen, head of the Department of Agriculture grain and chemical division, said department officials "almost went wild" when they heard about the program in June.

Agriculture Department officials have been working for several years to find the source of the 2,4-D which did extensive and widespread damage to grapes this year. The dump operation is regulated by the Ecology Department.

Johansen said the Agriculture Department isn't sure the dump contributes to the 2,4-D problem and EPA officials don't think it does. The materials is also used by wheat farmers to control weeds.

The herbicide has damaged grape foliage and can delay berry ripening.

John Arnquist, district engineer for the Department of Ecology in Spokane, said that as of June 30 2,111 barrels of the 2,4-D tar and sludge had been buried. Each contained about 50 gallons, or 105,550 gallons in all.

Jim Moon, president of Resource Recovery Inc., said he agreed to halt burying operations from April to September next year after agriculture officials protested.

"We only haul air-tight barrels and bury them under three or four feet of dirt," he said. "We can't see that there is any danger, but I guess the Agriculture Department figured we were

an easy solution to their 2, 4-D problem."

Don Provost, supervisor of laboratory services for the Ecology Department, said the dumping is safe if properly handled.

"We can't control pesticides until we have a site to dispose of them," he said. "There is a potential for pollution but the way it is being handled we don't see any danger."

Most of the sludge comes from a Portland manufacturing plant since Oregon doesn't have a site to handle the waste as carefully as the Pasco operation, Provost said.

Frank Anderson, Benton County extension agent, said he wasn't consulted about the dumping permit, though he has been heavily involved with farmers trying to trace the grape damage source.

"If there was a leak in a barrel there could be real damage potential," he said. "You can't say it's not a source until it has been carefully checked out."

Johansen said air monitors

were installed at the site last month and several grape plants were placed near the barrels. No damage has been found yet.

The test is being questioned by agriculture officials because the plants weren't used when the barrels were being covered.

Ron Kercheval, manager of Snake River Vineyards, says he didn't think it would be a problem if the material is buried daily.

Damage from 2,4-D was considerable this year, he said: "as bad as I hope it ever gets."

A leaking barrel could be a very potential danger source, Kercheval added. "It would only take about a gallon of 2,4-D in vapor form to take every grape in the state."

Provost said as long as the operator meets state regulations he will be allowed to continue. Plans are to uncover the barrels later and see if some of the 2,4-D can be reclaimed, he said.